

Pappas Telecasting Companies' 'donation' of \$325,000 in airtime to Republican candidates in certain areas is yet another example, perhaps the most blatant yet, of a powerful media group abusing its privileged access to the public airwaves.

Civic education is not served when a media corporation decides to provide one side in local elections a louder voice than others. During election season, local audiences should be offered equal coverage of various candidates, and genuine debate -- not free airtime for one side and a disingenuous offer to their opponents to purchase an equal amount of response time.

Pappas uses the public airwaves free of charge and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. Pappas' actions are legally questionable and cast doubt on whether Pappas truly intends to serve the public interest, or solely their own. Their actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. Further, they show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than just a returned postcard. Thank you.